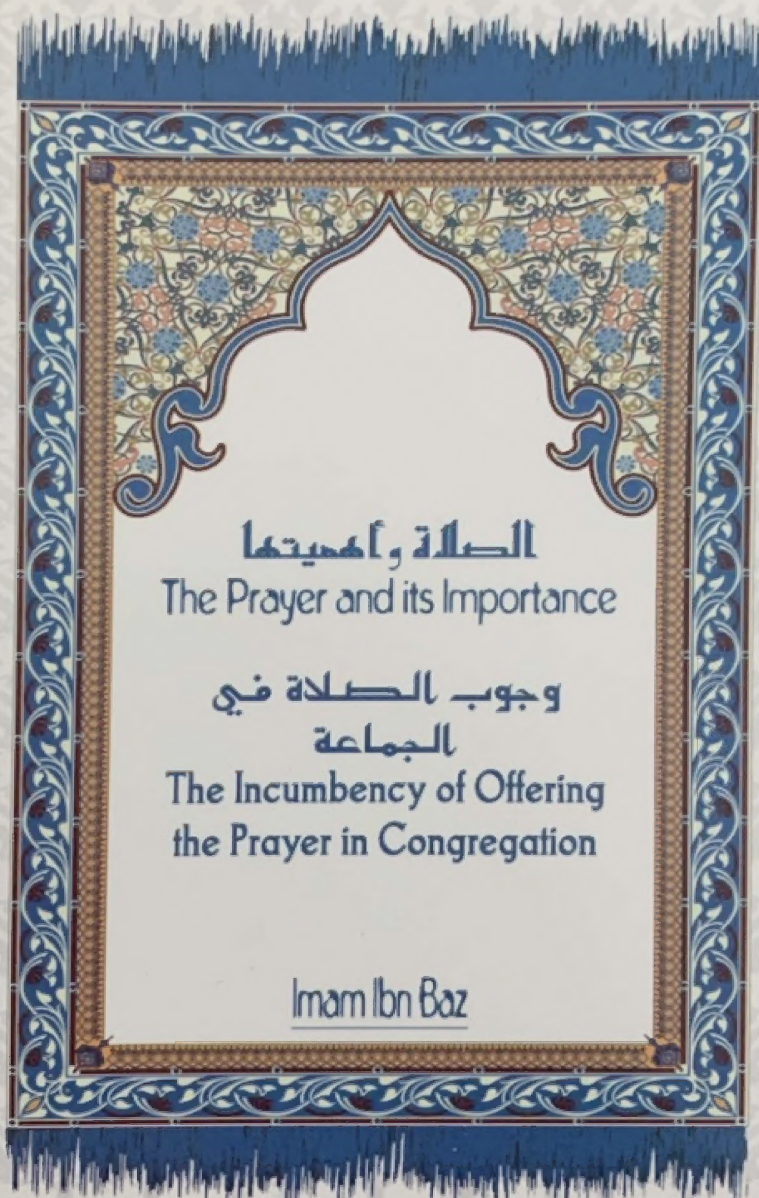


Two Treatises on the Prayer



الصلاة وأهميتها

The Prayer and its Importance

وجوب الصلاة في
الجماعة

The Incumbency of Offering
the Prayer in Congregation

Imam Ibn Baz

Ibn Baaz Library Series: #3

رسالتان في الصلاة

Two Treatises on the Prayer

الصلاة وأهميتها

The Prayer and Its Importance

وجوب الصلاة في الجماعة

The Incumbency of Offering the Prayer in
Congregation

By Imaam 'Abdul-'Azeez Ibn 'Abdillaah Ibn Baaz

Died 1420A.H.

May Allaah have mercy on him

Compiled and translated by

Muhammad Ibn Muneer 'Abdul-Hameed

May Allaah forgive him

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allaah, the Ever Merciful, the Granter of
Mercy

All praises belong and are due to Allaah, may Allaah
send prayers and salutations upon our Prophet
Muhammad, all of his family and companions, to
proceed.....

I am very happy to present to my brothers and sisters in
Islam, the third of this beneficial series, *Two Treatises on
the Prayer: The Prayer and its Importance*, and, *The
Incumbency of Offering the Prayer in Congregation*.

Both treatises have been selected from the shaykh's
collection of verdicts and articles which was compiled
and arranged by Dr. Muhammad Ibn Sa'd ash-
Shuwayi'r, and printed by Daarul-Qaasim.

It is Allaah, the Exalted, and Most High, Who I ask to
benefit therewith the translator, distributor and reader.

Written by the poor slave,
Aboo Ramlah Muhammad Ibn Muneer 'Abdul-Hameed

May Allaah forgive him
Sunday the 5th of Jumaadal-Awwal 1432 A.H.
April 9th 2011 C.E.

Al-Madeenah an-Nabawiyyah

The First Treatise:

الصلاة وأهميتها

The Prayer and Its Importance¹

All praises belong and are due to Allaah, the Lord of the worlds, there is no aggression except upon the wrong doers, and may prayers and salutations be sent upon our prophet Muhammad, all of his family and companions, to proceed...

[The Obligation to Show a Great Deal of Importance on the Prayer]

Surely it is upon every individual to show a great deal of importance on the prayer because its affair is paramount and its status is great.

[The Incumbency of making your Worship Sincere for Allaah, alone without any Partner]

It is incumbent upon you to make your worship sincere for Allaah, alone without any partner, and to

¹ "Majmoo' Fataawa wa Maqaalaat Samaahatish-Shaykh 'Abdil-'Azeez Ibn Baaz" (vol. 10/232).

declare yourself free and disassociated from All besides Allaah, whatever that deity may be. You must believe and profess that He, the Sublime, is the True Deity of worship, and all that is worshipped besides Allaah is false, just as He, the Mighty and Majestic, has stated in Soorah al-Hajj,

﴿ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْحَقُّ وَأَنْ مَا يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ هُوَ
الْبَاطِلُ﴾

That is because Allaah - He is al-Haqq [the Truth], and what they invoke besides Him, it is al-Baatil (the falsehood).¹

He, the Sublime, has also said in Soorah Luqmaan,

﴿ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْحَقُّ وَأَنْ مَا يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ الْبَاطِلُ﴾

That is because Allaah, He is al-Haqq [the Truth], and that which they invoke besides Him is al-Baatil.²

He, the Exalted, also says,

¹ Soorah al-Hajj (22): 62.

² Soorah Luqmaan (31): 30.

﴿ وَقَضَىٰ رَبُّكَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ ﴾

And your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him.¹

And He, the Mighty and Majestic, has also said,

﴿ إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ ﴾

You (Alone) we worship, and You (Alone) we ask for help (for each and everything).²

He, the Exalted, also says,

﴿ وَمَا أُمِرُوا إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ حُنَفَاءَ ﴾

And they were commanded not, but that they should worship Allaah and worship none but Him Alone.³

[The foundation of the religion of al-Islam]

This great essential [i.e. the Tauheed of Allaah] is the basis of the religion of al-Islam and it is the very first

¹ Soorah al-Israa' (17): 23.

² Soorah al-Faatihah (1): 5.

³ Soorah al-Bayyinah (98): 5.

thing with which the slave enters the religion of Allaah; al-Islaam.

After this testimony comes the testimony that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allaah. These two testimonies are the foundation of the religion. Your *deen* cannot be complete without the two. There cannot be any Islaam except with the *Tauheed* of Allaah, nor is there any Islaam except with belief and faith that Muhammad is the messenger of Allaah, '*alayhis-Salaat was-Salaam*.

So if a person were to fast during the day, stand in prayer during the night, and offer all types of worship unto Allaah but without believing in Muhammad after Allaah has sent him as a messenger, he would be a disbeliever, rather he would be from the greatest of the people in disbelief according to all of the people of knowledge.

Or if he bore witness and testified that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allaah, believed him and acted upon everything that he brought, but he associated partners along with Allaah, worshipping other deities along with Allaah, such as a prophet, or an angel, or

an idol, a tree, a boulder, a *jinni*, or a star, he would be a misguided infidel, even if he says that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allaah. This is because it is binding that he believes in both testimonies together. For it is incumbent that he single out Allaah and be sincere unto Him in worship.

[Belief in the Messenger of Allaah]

It is also incumbent upon you to believe that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allaah, he whom Allaah has sent to both the jinn and mankind. All of the previous messengers were only sent to their people and their nation, however our Prophet Muhammad, *'alayhis-salaatu was-salaam*, has been sent by Allaah to all of mankind; the Arabs and non Arabs, the jinn and humans, male and female, the rich and the poor, the leaders and the followers.

Thus all of them are included in his message-*'alayhis-salaatu was-salaam*-. So whoever answers, submits and believes in his call will enter paradise, but whoever is too arrogant and haughty to answer it will enter the fire. Allaah, the Exalted, says,

﴿وَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِهِ مِنَ الْأَحْزَابِ فَالنَّارُ مَوْعِدُهُ﴾

But those of the sects that disbelieve in it, the fire will be their promised meeting-place.¹

He, 'alayhis-salaatu was-salaam, also says,

وَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ لَا يَسْمَعُ بِي أَحَدٌ مِنْ هَذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ ، يَهُودِيٍّ ، أَوْ
نَصْرَانِيٍّ ، ثُمَّ يَمُوتُ وَلَمْ يُؤْمِنْ بِالَّذِي أُرْسِلْتُ بِهِ إِلَّا كَانَ مِنْ أَهْلِ النَّارِ

"By Allaah, the One in Whose hand my soul lies, no person from this nation hears of me, whether he is a Jew or a Christian, and then dies without believing in me except that he will be from the denizens of the fire."²

The Prophet, 'alayhis-salaatu was-salaam, also said,

وَكَانَ النَّبِيُّ يُبْعَثُ إِلَى قَوْمِهِ خَاصَّةً وَبُعِثْتُ إِلَى النَّاسِ عَامَّةً

"The prophets before me were only sent to their people, but I have been sent to all of mankind."³

He, the Sublime and Exalted, has also said,

¹ Soorah Hud (11): 17.

² Collected by Muslim (no. 384) from the narration of Aboo Hurayrah, *radiyallaahu 'anhu*.

³ Collected by al-Bukhaari (no. 438) and Muslim (no. 1163) from the narration of Jaabir Ibn 'Abdillaah, *radiyallaahu 'anhu*.

﴿قُلْ يَتَايُهَا النَّاسُ إِنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِلَيْكُمْ جَمِيعًا﴾

*Say, 'O mankind! Verily, I am the Messenger of Allaah unto all you.'*¹

He, the Sublime and Exalted, also says,

﴿وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا كَافَّةً لِّلنَّاسِ بَشِيرًا وَنَذِيرًا﴾

*And We have not sent you except as a giver of glad tidings and a warner to all mankind.*²

He, the Mighty and Majestic, also says,

﴿وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ﴾

And We have not sent you except as a mercy for the 'Aalameen.

May prayers and salutations be sent on him.

¹ Soorah al-'Araaf (7): 157.

² Soorah Saba' (34): 107.

[The Prayer is the Greatest Pillar of Islam after the Two *Shahaadahs*]

Then after these two testimonies comes the matter of the prayer; *as-Salaat*, which is the greatest of Islaam's five pillars after the two testimonies. Whoever protects his prayer will protect the rest of his religion, and whoever wastes it, will waste the rest of his religion even more.

There is a hadeeth collected in the *musnad* of Imaam Ahmad¹ with a fair chain of narration, on the authority of 'Abdullaah Ibn 'Amr Ibn al-'Aas, *radiyallaahu 'anhumaa*, who reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said to his companions,

مَنْ حَافِظَ عَلَيْهَا كَانَتْ لَهُ نُورًا وَبُرْهَانًا وَنَجَاةٌ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ، وَمَنْ لَمْ يُحَافِظْ عَلَيْهَا لَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ نُورٌ، وَلَا بُرْهَانٌ، وَلَا نَجَاةٌ، وَخُسْرٌ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ مَعَ فِرْعَوْنَ، وَهَامَانَ، وَقَارُونَ، وَأُبَيِّ بْنِ خَلْفٍ

"Whoever strictly guards the prayer it will be for him a light, a proof, and a means of salvation on the Day of Judgment.

¹ (2/169).

*Whoever does not strictly guard the prayer he will not have any light, or proof, or salvation, and he will be resurrected on the Day of Judgment with Fir'aun, Haamaan, Qaaroon and Ubayy Ibn Khalaf."*¹

[Imitating the Heads of the Wretched Disbelievers]

Some of the *imaams* have said in the explanation of this hadeeth: "Those who have wasted the prayer will only be resurrected along with these heads from the wretched disbelievers; Fir'aun, Haamaan, Qaaroon, and Ubayy Ibn Khalaf, because they have imitated them, and a man will be with the one whom he imitates."

He, the Exalted and High, says,

﴿ أَحْشُرُوا الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا وَأَزْوَاجَهُمْ وَمَا كَانُوا يَعْبُدُونَ ﴾

*(It will be said to the angels): "Assemble those who did wrong, together with their azwaaaj."*²

¹ This hadeeth has also been collected by ad-Daarimi in his *sunan* (2/301); consult: *Fruits of Prayer* (pg. 13) footnote no. 2.

² Soorah as-Saffaat (37): 22.

In other words, along with their partners and matches.

So whoever's problem and reason for leaving off the prayer was leadership, he will be resurrected with Fir'aun, because the vast dominion that Fir'aun owned caused him to be arrogant and as a result he showed hatred to Moosaa, *'alayhi-salaatu was-salaam*. Consequently, he became from the miserable, those who ended up with total loss, and went unto the Fire.

He, the Exalted, says,

﴿أَدْخِلُوا آلَ فِرْعَوْنَ أَشَدَّ الْعَذَابِ﴾

(It will be said to the angels): "Cause Fir'auns' people to enter the severest torment!"¹

We seek refuge in Allaah from that.

Whoever's career and ministry pushes him to leave off the prayer, then he has imitated Haamaan; the minister of Fir'aun, and he will be resurrected along with him on the Day of Judgment, and refuge is sought in Allaah from that.

¹ Soorah Ghaafir (39): 46.

Whoever leaves off the prayer because of wealth, lusts and bounties, then he has imitated Qaaron; he to whom Allaah gave great amounts of wealth. But he became arrogant and transgressed the boundaries until Allaah caused the earth to swallow him and his house up. Thus, this individual who leaves off the prayer because of chasing wealth has mimicked him and will therefore be gathered with him on the Day of Judgment, and taken with him to the fire.

As for the one who is preoccupied from the prayer because of trade, buying, selling, and worldly gains, then he has imitated Ubayy Ibn Khalaf; the merchant of Makkah. Thus, he will be gathered with him and taken towards the fire, and we seek protection in Allaah from the disbelievers and falling into imitating them in their actions.

[The Grave Danger of Leaving off the Prayer]

The point that we are trying to make here is that the matter of the prayer is foremost. It has been authentically reported that the Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ) said,

رَأْسُ الْأَمْرِ الْإِسْلَامُ، وَعَمُودُهُ الصَّلَاةُ، وَذِرْوَةُ سَنَامِهِ الْجِهَادُ فِي
سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ

"The head of the affair is Islaam, its main-prop is the prayer
and the top of its apex is jihaad in Allaah's cause."¹

He, 'alayhis-salaatu was-salaam, has also said,

الْعَهْدُ الَّذِي بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَهُمُ الصَّلَاةُ، فَمَنْ تَرَكَهَا فَقَدْ كَفَرَ

"The covenant that lies between us and them is the prayer,
so whoever leaves it off has indeed committed disbelief.

This hadeeth has been collected by Imaam Ahmad²,
Aboo Daawood³, at-Tirmidhi⁴, an-Nasaaee⁵, and Ibn
Maajah⁶ with an authentic chain of narration, on the
authority of Buraydah, radiyallaahu 'anhu.

¹ Collected by at-Tirmidhi in his *sunan* (no. 2541), Ibn Maajah in his *sunan* (no. 3973), Ahmad in *al-Musnad* (5/231) and others, from the narration of 'Abdullaah Ibn Mas'ood, radiyallaahu 'anhu, and Imaam at-Tirmidhi declared it to be authentic.

² In his *musnad* (5/346).

³ I did not find it the *sunan* of Aboo Daawood.

⁴ In his *sunan* (no. 2545).

⁵ In his *sunan* (no. 459).

⁶ In his *sunan* (no. 1079).

Imaam Muslim has collected the narration of Jaabir, *radiyallaahu 'anhumaa*, in his *saheeh* that reads: the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

بَيْنَ الرَّجُلِ وَبَيْنَ الشُّرْكِ، وَالْكُفْرِ تَرْكُ الصَّلَاةِ

*"Between a man and shirk and kufr is abandoning the prayer."*¹

Moreover, this affair is major and extremely dangerous. If we were to look at the state of the people today, then we would be forced to say, '*laa haula wa laa quwwata ill billaah*', there are so many people who refrain from the prayer and there are countless individuals who are laid back and lethargic when it comes to establishing the prayer in congregation, and we ask Allaah for us and all of the Muslims true guidance.

Allaah, the Mighty and Majestic, has blessed us with so many bounties and endowed us with countless favors of good, however, the son of Adam is exactly like what Allaah, the Sublime and Exalted, has said about him,

¹ (no. 86).

﴿ كَلَّا إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لِرَبِّهِ لَكَنَّاظٍ ﴾

Nay! Verily, man does transgress.

﴿ أَلَمْ يَرَهُ أَتَسْتَعِفُّ ﴾

Because he considers himself self-sufficient.¹

Allaah has given us bounties back to back and blessed us with so many favors, but many of the people have returned these favors with disobedience and ungratefulness; we seek refuge in Allaah from that.

Thus, it is our duty is to beware of falling into becoming lazy and lethargic from the prayer and showing ungratefulness to Allaah, just as it is our responsibility to convey and pass on the message.

[The Obligation of Passing on the Message]

Every individual must pass on the message to those who are around him and work very hard in exerting himself in giving *da'wah*.

¹ Soorah al-'Alaq (96): 6-7.

He should instruct those around him who may be of those who refrain from the prayer, those who are lazy and lethargic, those who fall short regarding the prayer, other obligations of the religion, the rights of Allaah, and or the rights of His slaves. He should do this; perhaps that Allaah will guide those individuals with his efforts being a reason behind that. Indeed, the Prophet (ﷺ) used to say,

فَلْيُبَلِّغِ الشَّاهِدُ الْعَائِبَ، فَرُبَّ مُبَلِّغٍ أَوْعَى مِنْ سَامِعٍ

*"Let the one who is present inform the one who is absent, for surely, the one who has received the information could possibly understand it better than the one who actually heard it."*¹

[The Proof Citing that the Individual who doesn't Offer the Prayer is a Disbeliever]

Many of the people of knowledge hold the view that the one who leaves off the prayer out of negligence and carelessness- even if he doesn't reject its incumbency- commits major disbelief. This view is

¹ Collected by al-Bukhaari (no. 67) and Muslim (no. 4359) from the narration of Abu Bakrah, *radiyallaahu 'anhu*.

based on the many verses and *ahaadeeth*, some of which we have previously mentioned.

They hold this view even if this person believes that the prayer is obligatory. Whenever he leaves it off out of laziness then he has played around with this obligatory matter and disobeyed his Lord with a formidable act of mutiny. Consequently, he will have committed major disbelief, according to the most correct view of the scholars. This view is based on the generality of the proofs and evidences, from them is the saying of the Messenger, '*alayhis-salaatu was-salaam*,

العَهْدُ الَّذِي بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَهُمُ الصَّلَاةُ، فَمَنْ تَرَكَهَا فَقَدْ كَفَرَ

*"The covenant that lies between us and them is the prayer, so whoever leaves it off has indeed committed disbelief."*¹

He did not say, '*Whoever rejects its incumbency*', rather he said, '*Whoever leaves it off*'.

Moreover, this generally includes the one who rejects it and the one who does not reject it, also is case with the saying of his (ﷺ),

¹ See pg. 12.

بَيْنَ الرَّجُلِ وَبَيْنَ الشُّرْكِ، وَالْكُفْرِ تَرْكُ الصَّلَاةِ

*"Between a man and shirk and kufr is abandoning the prayer."*¹

He did not say, 'If he rejects its incumbency', keeping in mind that the Messenger, 'alayhis-salaatu was-salaam, is the most eloquent and knowledgeable of the people, 'alayhi-salaatu was-salaam, and he could have easily said, 'If he leaves it off out of rejection', or "If he rejects its incumbency', nothing prevented him from this saying this. If he would have said that it would clarify this ruling, if the ruling was truly as these individuals [i.e. the other scholars who hold the view that he is not a *kaafir*] say.

Hence, this proves that the sheer act of leaving off this major obligation is an act of major disbelief, and apostasy, and we ask Allaah for safety and to protect us from this.

[The Impermissibility of a Muslim Woman staying with a Man who does not offer the Prayer]

¹ See pg. 13.

Furthermore, it is unlawful for a Muslim woman to remain with man who doesn't pray until he returns and repents unto Allaah.

The noble *taabi'ee*, 'Abdullaah Ibn Shaqeeq al-Uqaylee, *rahimahullaah*, said,

كَانَ أَصْحَابُ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ لَا يَرُونَ شَيْئاً مِنْ
الْأَعْمَالِ تَرَكُوهُ كُفْرٌ غَيْرَ الصَّلَاةِ

*"The companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) did not see leaving off any actions to be disbelief except for leaving off the prayer."*¹

He has mentioned here that they have come to consensus that leaving off the prayer is disbelief and he did not say, with the condition or stipulation that he rejects its incumbency or disavows its obligation.

**[The Verdict on the one who Denounces the
Obligation of Offering the Prayer]**

¹ Collected by at-Tirmidhi (no. 2622).

As for the one who says, 'The prayer is not obligatory', then this person is a disbeliever and his disbelief is major disbelief according to all of the scholars. This individual is a disbeliever even if he offers the prayer with the people as long as he rejects its incumbency, then he has committed major *kuf*r according to the scholarly consensus, and we ask Allaah to protect us from that.

The Second Treatise

The Incumbency of Offering the Prayer in Congregation¹

By: Imaam 'Abdul-'Azeez Ibn 'Abdillaah Ibn Baaz
(*rahimahullaah*)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

From 'Abdul-'Azeez Ibn 'Abdillaah Ibn Baaz to
whomsoever this reaches from the Muslims, may
Allaah grant them success towards that which
includes His good pleasure and may He array them
and myself in the path of he who fears and dreads
Him; *aameen*.

*Salaamum 'alaykum wa rahmatullaahi wa
barakaatuhu...to proceed:*

[Reasons Behind the Treatise]

¹ *Majmoo Fataawaa wa Maqaalaat Mutanawwi'ah* (12/15-21).

It has reached me that many people are careless in establishing the congregational prayer and they use as a proof the allowance given by some of the scholars concerning this [i.e. by taking the view of those people of knowledge who see that the congregational prayer is not *waajib*]. So it has therefore become mandatory upon me to clarify the tremendous significance of this matter. There lies no doubt that this is a great act of *munkar* and a grave danger.

Furthermore it is binding upon the people of knowledge to bring the people's attention to this, and warn them there from whereas it is an outward, clear act of *munkar* which is unlawful for us to keep silent about.

Well known is the fact that it is unallowable for the Muslim to be careless with an affair that has been magnified by in His Book and exalted by His noble Messenger-*sallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*-in his Sunnah.

[Aayaat Citing the Incumbency of Offering the Prayer in Congregation]

Allaah, the Glorified, has made frequent mention of the prayer in His Ever-Generous Book [the Qur'aan], ennobled its matter, commanded for its strict-

guarding and establishment in congregation, and has informed that laziness and lethargy concerning it is from the characteristics of the hypocrites.

He, the Exalted, says,

﴿ حَافِظُوا عَلَى الصَّلَوَاتِ وَالصَّلَاةِ الْوُسْطَىٰ وَقُومُوا لِلَّهِ قَانِتِينَ ﴾

*Guard strictly the prayers especially the middle prayer.
And stand before Allaah with constant obedience.¹*

How is the slave to become acquainted with the strict-guarding and magnification of the prayer if he fails to establish it along with his brethren and is languid concerning its affair?

He, the Most High, also says,

﴿ وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَارْكَعُوا مَعَ الرَّاكِعِينَ ﴾

*And perform the prayer, give Zakaat, and bow down along
with ar-Raki'oon.²*

¹ Soorah al-Baqarah (2): 238.

² Soorah al-Baqarah (2): 43.

This noble verse is a text citing the incumbency of performing the congregational prayer along with the *Musalleen*.

If the desired meaning was just its' sheer establishment, then a clear, lucid relation would not appear towards the end of the verse, being the statement of His, the Glorified; {*and bow down along with ar-Raki'oon*} due to the fact that He has commanded for it to be established in the beginning of the verse.

Allaah, the Exalted, has also said,

﴿وَإِذَا كُنْتَ فِيهِمْ فَأَقَمْتَ لَهُمُ الصَّلَاةَ فَلْتَقُمْ طَائِفَةٌ مِّنْهُمْ مَّعَكَ وَلْيَأْخُذُوا أَسْلِحَهُمْ فَإِذَا سَجَدُوا فَلْيَكُونُوا مِن وَرَائِكُمْ وَلْتَأْتِ طَائِفَةٌ أُخْرَىٰ لَمْ يُصَلُّوا فَلْيُصَلُّوا مَعَكَ وَلْيَأْخُذُوا حِذْرَهُمْ وَأَسْلِحَهُمْ﴾

When you (O Messenger Muhammad-sallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam-) are among them, and lead them in the prayer, let one party of them stand up (in prayer) with you taking their arms with them; when they finish their prostrations, let them take their positions in the rear and let the other

party come up which have not yet prayed, and let them pray with you taking all the precautions and bearing arms.¹

Allaah, the Exalted, has made establishing the prayer along with the congregation incumbent in the time of war, so how is the case in the time of peace? If a man was to be excused for abandoning the prayer in congregation, those standing in rows on the lookout for the enemy, and those threatened by their attack would be more deserving to be excused from the congregation. Since this exemption is not mentioned, we come to the conclusion that the congregational prayer is from the most mandatory obligations and no one is allowed to refrain there from.

[Ahaadeeth Citing the Incumbency of Offering the Prayer in Congregation]

It is collected in the two *saheehs*² [of al-Bukhaaree and Muslim] on the authority of Aboo Hurayrah, *radiyallaahu 'anhu*, who narrated that the Prophet-*sallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam*- said,

¹ Soorah an-Nisaa' (2): 102.

² Al-Bukhaari (no. 657) Muslim (no. 651).

وَلَقَدْ هَمَمْتُ أَنْ أَمُرَ بِالصَّلَاةِ فَتُقَامَ، ثُمَّ أَمُرَ رَجُلًا فَيُصَلِّيَ
بِالنَّاسِ، ثُمَّ أُنْطَلِقَ مَعِيَ بِرِجَالٍ مَعَهُمْ حُزْمٌ مِنْ حَطَبٍ، إِلَى قَوْمٍ لَا
يَشْهَدُونَ الصَّلَاةَ، فَأُحَرِّقَ عَلَيْهِمْ بُيُوتَهُمْ

"Certainly, I have thought of giving orders for the prayer to be established, then ordering a man to lead the people, then going off with some men carrying fire wood for fuel to some people who do not attend the prayer and burning down their houses over them." To the end of the hadeeth.

[There is another version of this same hadeeth] In the *musnad* of Imaam Ahmad¹ on his authority [Aboo Hurayrah] that he-sallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam-said,

لَوْ لَا مَا فِي الْبُيُوتِ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ وَالذُّرِّيَّةِ لَحَرَّقْتُهَا عَلَيْهِمْ

"If it weren't for the women and children in those houses I would burn them [the houses] down over them [those men who don't attend the congregational prayer without a valid, legislative excuse]."

¹ Just as it can be found in "*Majmaa' az-Zawaa'id*" (vol. 2/pg. 42). Al-Haythami said: "It has been collected by Ahmad and Aboo Ma'shar [one of the narrators in the chain of this hadeeth] is weak." This version of the hadeeth has also been declared weak by Shaykh al-Albaanee, *rahimahullaah*, refer to: "*Da'eef at-Targheeb*" (vol. 1/pg. 58)

**[Narrations from Ibn Mas'ood, *radiyallaahu 'anhu*,
regarding the congregational prayer]**

Reported in Saheeh Muslim¹ on the authority of Ibn Mas'ood, *radiyallaahu 'anhu*, who said,

وَلَقَدْ رَأَيْتُنَا وَمَا يَتَخَلَّفُ عَنْهَا إِلَّا مُنَافِقٌ عُلِمَ نِفَاقُهُ، أَوْ مَرِيضٌ،
وَإِنْ كَانَ الْمَرِيضُ لَيَمَشِي بَيْنَ الرَّجُلَيْنِ حَتَّى يُقَامَ فِي الصَّفِّ

“Surely, I have seen the time when no one stayed away from the prayer except a hypocrite whose hypocrisy was well known, or a sick man, even though the sick man would walk between two men (i.e. with the help of two persons with one on each side) so that he could stand in the row.”

He also said,

إِنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - عَلَّمَنَا سُنَنَ الْهُدَى؛ وَإِنَّ
مَنْ سَنَّ الْهُدَى الصَّلَاةَ فِي الْمَسْجِدِ الَّذِي يُؤَدَّبُ فِيهِ

“For sure, the Messenger of Allaah-sallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam-has taught us the paths of right guidance, among

¹ (no. 654)

which is the prayer in the masjid in which the adhaan is called."¹

Therein he also said,

مَنْ سَرَّهُ أَنْ يَلْقَى اللَّهَ عَدَاً مُسْلِماً فَلْيَحَافِظْ عَلَى هَؤُلَاءِ الصَّلَوَاتِ
حَيْثُ يُنَادَى بِهِنَّ، فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى شَرَعَ لِنَبِيِّكُمْ سُنَنَ الْهُدَى،
وَأَنْهَنَ مِنْ سُنَنِ الْهُدَى، وَلَوْ أَنَّكُمْ صَلَّيْتُمْ فِي بُيُوتِكُمْ كَمَا يُصَلِّي
هَذَا الْمُتَخَلِّفُ فِي بَيْتِهِ لَتَرَكْتُمْ سُنَّةَ نَبِيِّكُمْ، وَ لَوْ تَرَكْتُمْ سُنَّةَ نَبِيِّكُمْ
لَضَلَلْتُمْ، وَمَا مِنْ رَجُلٍ يَتَطَهَّرُ فَيُحْسِنُ الطُّهُورَ ثُمَّ يَعْمُدُ إِلَى
مَسْجِدٍ مِنْ هَذِهِ الْمَسَاجِدِ إِلَّا كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَهُ لِكُلِّ خُطْوَةٍ يَخْطُوهَا
حَسَنَةً، وَيَرْفَعُهُ بِهَا دَرَجَةً، وَيُحِطُّ عَنْهُ بِهَا سَيِّئَةٌ، وَلَقَدْ رَأَيْتُنَا وَمَا
يَتَخَلَّفُ عَنْهَا إِلَّا مُنَافِقٌ مَعْلُومُ النِّفَاقِ ، وَلَقَدْ كَانَ الرَّجُلُ يُؤْتَى
بِهِ، يُهَادَى بَيْنَ الرَّجُلَيْنِ حَتَّى يُقَامَ فِي الصَّفِّ.

"Whoever likes to meet Allaah tomorrow as a Muslim, he should strictly guard the observing of these prayers, when a call is announced for them, for indeed, Allaah has laid down for your Prophet the paths of right guidance, and

¹ See previous footnote.

surely, these prayers are among the paths of right guidance. If you were to pray in your houses, as this straggler prays in his house, you would abandon the Sunnah of your Prophet, and if you were to abandon the Sunnah of your Prophet, you would go astray. No man purifies himself, doing it well, then makes for one of those masjids, without Allaah recording a good deed for him for every step he takes raising him a decree for it, and effacing a sin from him for it. I have seen the time when no one stayed away from it, except a hypocrite, who was well known for his hypocrisy, whereas a man would be brought swaying [due to weakness] between two men till he was setup in a row.”¹

Imaam Muslim has also reported in his *saheeh*² on the authority of Aboo Hurayrah, *radiyallaahu ‘anh*, who reported that once a blind man said, “O Messenger of Allaah! I have no one to guide me to the masjid. So is there any allowance for me to offer the prayer in my home?” The Prophet-sallaahu ‘alayhi wa sallam-responded to him asking,

هَلْ تَسْمَعُ النَّدَاءَ بِالصَّلَاةِ؟

¹ See previous footnote.

² (no. 653)

'Do you hear the call to the prayer?'

He replied, 'Yes'. He [the Prophet] then said,

فَأَجِبْ

'So respond to it.'

It is also authentically reported that he [the Prophet-sallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam-] said,

مَنْ سَمِعَ النَّدَاءَ فَلَمْ يَأْتِهِ فَلَا صَلَاةَ لَهُ إِلَّا مِنْ عُذْرٍ

"Whoever hears the call to the prayer and doesn't respond to it has no prayer, unless he had an excuse."¹

¹ This hadeeth has been collected by Ibn Maajah (no. 793), ad-Daaraqutni (vol. 1/pg. 420), Ibn Hibbaan (2064), al-Haakim (no. 893) and others. The scholars of both past and present differ over the authenticity of its authenticity. Said *al-Haafidh* Ibn Rajab, *rahimahullaah*, in *Fathul-Baaree* (vol. 5/pg. 449): "That which is correct to Imaam Ahmad and others is that this narration is *mauqoof* [i.e. attributing this to the Prophet, *sallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam-* is a mistake made by one of the narrators, instead it was a statement made by Ibn 'Abbaas, *radiyallaahu 'anhumaa*]." If it wasn't for the fear of making the footnote too long, I would mention for you-o noble reader-all of the details of this issue along with the statements of People of Knowledge regarding this hadeeth. However, in what we have mentioned is sufficiency.

**[From the Reasons behind a man Being Allowed to
offer the Prayer in his Home]**

Ibn 'Abbaas-radiyallaahu 'anhumaa-was asked: 'What is a [valid, legislative] excuse?' He replied,

خَوْفٌ أَوْ مَرَضٌ

*"Fear [from the immediate danger of an enemy and so forth] or an illness."*¹

Furthermore, the *ahaadeeth* citing the incumbency of the congregational prayer and the obligation of its establishment in the houses of Allaah in which Allaah has ordered to be raised (to be cleaned, honored and maintained), and in which His name is to be remembered are numberless.

Therefore, it is incumbent upon the Muslim to carefully look after this affair, hasten towards it, and consult with it his children, household, neighbors and the rest of the his Muslim brethren.

¹ Collected by Aboo Daawood (no. 551), ad-Daaraqutni (vol. 1/pg. 420) and others and its chain is weak. Consult: "*Nasbur-Raayyah*" (vol. 2/pg. 15), "*at-Talkhees al-Habeer*" (vol. 2/pg. 30), "*at-Tahqeeq*" (vol. 1/pg. 470) and "*al-Irwaa*" (vol. 2/pg. 336).

This is all out of compliance to the command of Allaah and His Messenger, caution from what Allaah and His Messenger have prohibited, and being far and remote from imitating the people of hypocrisy.

[Avoiding the Congregational Prayer is from the Traits of the People of Hypocrisy]

Those whom Allaah has described their blameworthy characteristics and qualities, among the evilest of them is laziness for the prayer.

He, the Exalted, says,

﴿ إِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ يُخَادِعُونَ اللَّهَ وَهُوَ خَدِعُهُمْ وَإِذَا قَامُوا إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ

قَامُوا كُسَالَى يُرَاءُونَ النَّاسَ وَلَا يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ۝ ﴾

Verily, the hypocrites seek to deceive Allaah, but it is He Who deceives them. And when they stand up for the prayer, they stand with laziness and to be seen by men, and they do not remember Allaah but little.

﴿ مُذَبْذَبِينَ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ لَا إِلَى هَؤُلَاءِ وَلَا إِلَى هَؤُلَاءِ ۚ وَمَنْ يُضْلِلِ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ سَبِيلًا ۝ ﴾

﴿ فَلَنْ تَجِدَ لَهُ سَبِيلًا ۝ ﴾

(They are) swaying between this and that, belonging neither to these nor to those; and he whom Allaah sends astray, you will not find for him a way.¹

[Abandoning the Congregation is from the Greatest Reasons behind Abandoning the Prayer]

Also, due to the reality that failing to establish it in congregation is from the greatest reasons behind it being totally abandoned.

[Abandoning the Prayer is an Act of Disbelief]

It is well known that abandoning the prayer is disbelief, misguidance and exiting from the fold of Islaam, due to the saying of the Prophet-sallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam- ,

بَيْنَ الرَّجُلِ وَ بَيْنَ الْكُفْرِ وَالشِّرْكِ تَرْكُ الصَّلَاةِ

“Between a man and kufr and shirk is abandoning the prayer.”

¹ Soorah an-Nisaa' (4): 142-143.

This hadeeth has been collected by Muslim in his *saheeh* on the authority of Jaabir, *radiyallaahu 'anhumaa*.¹

He-sallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam-has also said,

العَهْدُ الَّذِي بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَهُمُ الصَّلَاةُ، فَمَنْ تَرَكَهَا فَقَدْ كَفَرَ

*"The covenant that lies between us and them is the prayer, so whoever abandons it has indeed disbelieved."*²

The *aayaat* and *ahaadeeth* regarding the magnification of the affair of the prayer, the incumbency of strictly-guarding, and establishing it just as Allaah has legislated, and warning from abandoning it are countless and well-known.

¹ (no. 82)

² Collected by Ahmad (no. 22937), at-Tirmidhi (no. 2621), an-Nasaai'ee (no. 462), Ibn Maajah (no.1079), and others from the narration of Buraydah Ibn 'Abdillaah, *radiyallaahu 'anhu*. It has been authenticated by Imaam at-Tirmidhi, Imaam al-Haakim, Shaykh al-Albaanee and others. Imaam Hibatullaah at-Tabaree declared it to fulfill the standards of Imaam Muslim; consult: "*Sharh Usool 'Itiqaad Ahlis-Sunnah*" (vol. 1520), "*al-Mustadrak*" (vol. 1 pg. 48) and "*Saheehut-Targheeb*" (no. 564) and "*al-Jaami' as-Saheeh mimmaa laysa fis-Saheehayn*" vol. 1.

Hence, what is obligatory upon every Muslim is to strictly guard it during its prescribed times, establish it just as Allaah has legislated, and to offer it along with his brethren in congregation in the houses of Allaah, out obedience to Allaah, the Sublime, and His Messenger-sallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam- along with being cautious of Allaah's anger and painful punishment.

[The Responsibility of the Muslim when the Truth becomes Clear to him]

Moreover, whenever the truth becomes clear and its evidences lucid, then it is unlawful for anyone to stray away from adhering thereto because of the saying or view of so and so. This is proven by what He, the Sublime, says,

﴿ فَإِنْ تَنَزَعْتُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ
وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ۚ ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَحْسَنُ تَأْوِيلًا ۝ ﴾

(And) if you differ in anything amongst yourselves, refer it to Allaah and His Messenger, if you believe in Allaah and in the Last Day. That is better and more suitable for final determination.¹

¹ Soorah (4): 59.

He, the Exalted, also says,

﴿فَلْيَحْذَرِ الَّذِينَ يُخَالِفُونَ عَنْ أَمْرِهِ أَنْ تُصِيبَهُمْ فِتْنَةٌ أَوْ يُصِيبَهُمْ
عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ﴾

*And let those who oppose the Messenger's commandment
beware, lest some fitnah befall them or a painful torment be
inflicted on them.¹*

[From the Benefits of the Congregational Prayer]

Hidden not are the plentiful profits and surplus
benefits that are entailed in the congregational prayer.
From among the clearest of them are:

- Mutual acquaintance
- Mutual cooperation upon righteousness and piety
- Enjoining one another with the truth and patiently
persevering upon it

¹ Soorah an-Noor (24): 63.

- Encouraging those who stay behind [and offer the prayer in their homes]
- Teaching the ignorant
- Enraging the people of hypocrisy and being from far from their practice and way
- Manifesting the religious symbols of Allaah amidst His slaves
- Calling to Allaah, the Exalted, with both speech and action, and many other countless benefits.

[A Warning from Imitating the People of Hypocrisy]

There are some people who stay up all night and are therefore late for the *Salaatul-Fajr* and others stay away from attending *Salaatul-'Ishaa*. No doubt, this is a great act of *munkar*, and imitating the enemies of the religion, the *munaafiqoon*, those whom Allaah, the Sublime, has said about,

﴿ إِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ فِي الدَّرَكِ الْأَسْفَلِ مِنَ النَّارِ وَلَنْ تَجِدَ لَهُمْ نَصِيرًا ﴾

*Verily, the hypocrites will be in the lowest depth of the Fire;
no helper will you find for them.*¹

He, the Exalted, has also said about them,

﴿الْمُنْفِقُونَ وَالْمُنْفِقَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ مِّنْ بَعْضٍ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمُنْكَرِ
وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَقْبِضُونَ أَيْدِيَهُمْ نَسُوا اللَّهَ فَنَسِيَهُمْ
إِنَّ الْمُنْفِقِينَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ﴾

*The hypocrites, men and women, are from one another;
they enjoin (on the people) al-Munkar (i.e. every kind of
evil wicked deed), and forbid (people) from al-Ma'roof (i.e.
every kind good and wholesome deed), and they close their
hands (from spending in Allaah's cause). They have
forgotten Allaah, so He has abandoned them. Verily, the
hypocrites are the Faasiqoon (rebellious, disobedient to
Allaah).*

﴿وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الْمُنْفِقِينَ وَالْمُنْفِقَاتِ وَالْكُفَّارَ نَارَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدِينَ
فِيهَا هِيَ حَسْبُهُمْ وَلَعْنُهُمُ اللَّهُ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُّقِيمٌ﴾

*Allaah has promised the hypocrites; men and women, and
the disbelievers, the Fire of Hell, therein shall they abide. It*

¹ Soorah an-Nisaa' (4): 145.

will suffice them. Allaah has cursed them and for them is the lasting torment.¹

He, the Sublime, also says about them,

﴿وَمَا مَنَعَهُمْ أَنْ تُقْبَلَ مِنْهُمْ نَفَقَتُهُمْ إِلَّا أَنْهُمْ كَفَرُوا بِاللَّهِ
وِرَسُولِهِ وَلَا يَأْتُونَ الصَّلَاةَ إِلَّا وَهُمْ كُسَالَى وَلَا يُنْفِقُونَ إِلَّا وَهُمْ
كَرْهُونَ﴾

And nothing prevents their contributions from being accepted from them except that they disbelieved in Allaah and in His Messenger and that they come not to the prayer except in a lazy state, and that they offer not contributions but unwillingly.

﴿فَلَا تُعْجِبْكَ أَمْوَالُهُمْ وَلَا أَوْلَادُهُمْ إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُعَذِّبَهُمْ بِهَا فِي
الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَتَزْهَقَ أَنْفُسُهُمْ وَهُمْ كَافِرُونَ﴾

So let not their wealth or their children amaze you, in reality Allaah's wishes to punish them with these things in the life of this world, and that their souls shall depart (die) while they are disbelievers.²

¹ Soorah at-Taubah (9): 67-68.

² Soorah at-Taubah (9): 54-55.

Therefore, it is incumbent upon each and every Muslim- both male and female- to beware of imitating these hypocrites in their [evil] statements, actions, sluggishness for the prayer and staying back from the *fajr* and '*ishaa* prayers, so he won't be gathered up with them [on the Day of Judgment].

[The Most Burdensome Prayer on the *Munaafiqoon*]

It is authentically reported that the Messenger of Allaah-sallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam- said,

إِنَّ أَثْقَلَ الصَّلَاةِ عَلَى الْمُنَافِقِينَ صَلَاةُ الْعِشَاءِ وَصَلَاةُ الْفَجْرِ،
وَلَوْ يَعْلَمُونَ مَا فِيهِمَا لَأَتَوْهُمَا وَلَوْ حَبَوًّا

"Indeed, the most burdensome prayers upon the hypocrites are the 'ishaa and fajr prayer. If they knew what lies in them [of blessings and rewards], they would come to them even if crawling." ¹

He-sallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam-has also said,

مَنْ تَشَبَّهَ بِقَوْمٍ فَهُوَ مِنْهُمْ

"Whoever imitates a people, then he is from them." ²

¹ See the footnote reference on pg. 26 of the treatise.

² It has been collected by Ahmad (no. 5114-5115), Aboo =

May Allaah grant me and you all the success to that which entails His good pleasure and the reform of the affair of the life of this world and the Hereafter. May He grant us all refuge from the evils of our own souls, mischievousness of own deeds, and from imitating the disbelievers and hypocrites. Surely, He is Most Munificent, Ever Generous.

And *as-Salaamu 'alaykum wa rahmatullaahi wa barakaatuhu*.

May Allaah extol prayers and peace upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family and companions.

=

Daawood (no. 4031) and others from the narration of Ibn 'Umar, *radiyallaahu 'anhumaa*. It has been authenticated by Shaykhul-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah, *al-Haafidh* Ibn Hajar, *al-Ameer as-San`anee* and shaykh al-Albaanee and Shaykh Muqbil Ibn Haadi; consult: "*Iqtidaa as-Siraat al-Mustaqeem*" (pg. 82), "*Majmoo' Fataawaa*" (vol. 25/pg. 325) "*al-Fath*" (vol. 10/pg. 271) (vol. 10/pg. 274), "*Subulus-Salaam*" (vol. 8 /pg. 192) and "*al-Irwaa'*" (vol. 5/pg. 109), *al-Jaami' as-Saheeh mimmaa laysa fis-Saheehayn* vol. 1 and "*The Impossibility of Dying One's Hair Black*. (pg. 16)